



Learn English Through Stories.

B Series

B44

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1. Lukas's Luck

Lukas had been a very wealthy farmer, but he hadn't managed his farm wisely and had been very careless with his money. He realized too late what a fool he had been, when he lost everything. Now he and his wife lived in poverty in a tiny house, which could hardly be called a house. The cracks in the walls made it impossible to keep warm. Rain came in through the holes in the roof. Their life was a constant struggle.

They had always prayed for a child, but during their years of wealth God had never listened. Now they were poor and had nothing and his wife gave birth to a baby daughter.

"Oh, what are we going to do?" his wife cried. "We don't have food for ourselves. How are we going to take care of this poor little stranger?"

"We'll find a way," Lukas said. "She's a gift from God, so he'll help us find a way. But first we must have her christened. We must ask someone to be our daughter's godmother."

They had no relatives in the area, so Lukas went to ask their neighbour's wife.

"My husband and I are only poor peasants, like you. Why should we add your child to our list of money worries?" was her answer.

Lukas returned home with the bad news.

"What can you expect?" asked his wife sadly. "When we were rich, everyone wanted to know us and be our friends. Even the mayor invited us to his home. But now we have nothing and not even a poor peasant woman will help us."

She was very worried about their little baby. Winter was almost at its end, but it was still very cold. At night the earth froze and in the morning the houses and trees were covered in snow. They had no clothes for their child, only old bits of cloth. And her bed was the cold, hard ground.

Lukas's wife kissed their baby and cried, "My poor darling. My poor little darling."

Then suddenly a happy thought came to her. She told Lukas to go and ask the mayor's wife to be their child's godmother. She was godmother to the mayor's child and was certain that the mayor's wife would do the same for them. Lukas didn't feel so certain, but he went to ask her.

With a heavy heart, Lukas walked past the fields and farm buildings that used to be his. He arrived at the mayor's house and gave his wife's good wishes to the mayor's wife. He then asked if she would be godmother to their child.

"You know how hard things are at the moment," she answered. "Everyone's struggling. I can't afford to help someone as poor as you. Why are you asking me, anyway? Isn't there someone else you could ask?"

"Well, my wife is godmother to your child," he answered simply.

"Oh! I see! So this is a debt that I have to repay, is it?" was her angry reply. "Is that the only reason your wife agreed to be our child's godmother? And tell me, what help is your wife to our child now, when you have nothing! How dare you come to my home and insult me like this! I wouldn't be your child's godmother if you paid me in gold!"

Lukas left in tears. When he got home, he described what had happened at the mayor's house. His wife was desperately unhappy, but he told her not to be discouraged. He was going to take their child to the christening himself and ask the first person he met on the road to be her godmother.

His wife, crying, wrapped their child in an old blanket to protect her from the winter winds and put her in her father's arms. Lukas dressed as warmly as he could and started on his journey. He carried his baby sadly but proudly along the road.

After several hours he saw an old woman, dressed in old, torn, dirty clothes, walking very slowly on her old, bent legs. He hesitated for a moment and then walked up to her, explained their situation, and asked her if she would be godmother to their baby.

The old woman smiled warmly, took the tiny baby in her arms and said, "Yes, of course I will. It will be an honour to be godmother to such a sweet little baby, whose father loves her so much."

They continued together to the church.

The priest was just getting ready to leave when his assistant hurried up to him and whispered that some people were arriving.

"Oh no!" said the priest, who wanted to get home for his supper. "Who is it and what do they want at this late hour?"

"It's only Lukas," answered his assistant. "You know - the one who lost everything. He's as poor as the poorest peasant now."

As they approached the church, the godmother saw that the assistant was whispering something unkind to the priest. So, as they entered, she pulled from her old dress a golden ducat and pressed it into the priest's hand. The priest was amazed. He looked at the ducat, then at the old woman in her torn clothes. He then quickly whispered to his assistant to prepare for the baby's christening.

The christening ceremony that followed was suitable for the wealthiest of merchants. The little girl received the name Marishka. After the christening, the priest walked with them to the door of the church. His assistant walked with them all the way to the gate, hoping for a nice reward. The old woman gave him a golden ducat, which he received gratefully.

When Lukas and the old woman reached the place where they had first met, she handed the baby to him. She then reached into her pocket and pulled out another golden ducat, which she put inside the baby's blanket.

She smiled at Lukas and said, "This is my gift to your child. This will provide enough money to bring her up well and give her everything she needs. This child will bring you and your wife great joy and comfort, and when she grows into a woman she will have a long and happy marriage."

The kind godmother then touched the ground and suddenly a beautiful rose bush appeared, covered in sweet-smelling flowers.

Lukas bent down to admire the lovely flowers and then turned to thank the old woman. But she was gone! He was amazed and confused.

"Goodbye!" he called. "Thank you, kind godmother!"

He stood there, holding little Marishka, looking all around him. He would probably have stood there for hours if Marishka hadn't started crying for her supper.

So he began walking, and as he walked he thought about all the wonderful things that had happened to him that day. At one point he stopped and felt in Marishka's blanket, to make sure that the ducat was still there, that he hadn't dreamed it. He took it out and suddenly it became ten ducats and fell out of his hand all over the ground. Again, he stood there, not speaking, full of

amazement. He gathered the ducats up, laughing, put them in his pockets, and almost ran with Marishka back to his home.

Lukas's wife had been waiting anxiously at home, hungry, thirsty, and cold. There was no food in the house and no money. She was very surprised when Lukas ran in with a happy smile on his face and told her all about the kind godmother.

When he finished, he told his wife to take the godmother's christening gift out of Marishka's blanket. The wife reached in and pulled out the ducat. Suddenly there were ten, twenty, thirty ducats! She cried out in happiness and surprise. The ducats flew out of her hands and rolled all over the floor. They both began to pick the ducats up, but wherever there was one, another ten appeared! In the end there was a beautiful golden pile shining in front of them. They fell onto the floor, laughing and crying at the same time.

Then Lukas's wife was suddenly full of fear. "Could this money be an evil curse? Maybe the woman is an evil spirit who wants to buy our souls?"

Lukas laughed. "Don't be silly," he told her. "What evil spirit would go into a church?"

But Lukas knew this godmother wasn't an ordinary woman. Maybe she was a good spirit sent by God to help them. He warned his wife, however, that they must guard their secret. He told her to hide the money and not tell anyone the true story.

He then took one ducat for the mayor to change, so he could buy eggs, flour, bread, and milk.

When he asked his wife what else he should buy, she immediately answered, "Our land, our house, our animals, our fields!"

"Tomorrow morning!" Lukas replied happily.

Then his wife became very serious and said, "But Lukas, please manage them more carefully this time."

Lukas took her in his arms and told her quietly, "I promise to do this, for you and our child. I've been very silly and caused us much unhappiness and worry. But I've learned my lesson. Please believe me."

He then left to get their supplies. While he was out, his wife sat holding her baby and dreaming happily about their future.

After some time Lukas returned with the mayor's servant, who was carrying buckets of fresh milk, a basket of eggs, and some wonderful cakes.

"The mayor's wife sends her good wishes to you both and has sent me to help you in any way I can," the servant told her.

Lukas's wife thanked her and watched as the servant then began preparing a fine soup for them on the fire. Lukas had also bought three soft feather beds, which he put by the fire.

The next day Lukas went to buy back their farm. The mayor's wife was extremely curious to know how Lukas and his wife had become wealthy again since his visit to their house the day before. So while Lukas was out, she visited his wife and asked questions. But Lukas's wife didn't give away their secret. She just told her that Marishka's godmother had very kindly given them enough money to help them start again.

After the mayor's wife left, Lukas's wife sat by the fire, thinking about their kind godmother. She thanked her for giving them a second chance in life.

Lukas did buy back all their property and this time he managed it wisely. He built handsome, solid farm buildings and a beautiful house for his family. He bought the very best animals and in the fall his fields were full of healthy golden wheat and corn. His farm became the best in the region. Lukas and his wife were loved and admired, as they were good neighbours, generous and helpful to any poor farmer who was having bad luck.

Marishka was a wonderful child. She gave Lukas and his wife great joy and comfort, as her godmother had said she would. When she became a woman her beauty attracted a wealthy prince, who asked her to be his wife. She married him and lived a long and happy life. Lukas and his wife grew old in good health. In the evenings they often sat by the fire and talked about the time when the kind godmother appeared and changed Lukas's luck.

- THE END -

2. Picture Dictionary

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CLEANING YOUR HOME



- A sweep the floor
- B vacuum
- C mop the floor
- D wash the windows
- E dust
- F wax the floor
- G polish the furniture
- H clean the bathroom
- I take out the garbage

- 1 broom
- 2 dustpan
- 3 whisk broom
- 4 carpet sweeper
- 5 vacuum (cleaner)
- 6 vacuum cleaner attachments
- 7 vacuum cleaner bag
- 8 hand vacuum

- 9 (dust) mop / (dry) mop
- 10 (sponge) mop
- 11 (wet) mop
- 12 paper towels
- 13 window cleaner
- 14 ammonia
- 15 dust cloth
- 16 feather duster

- 17 floor wax
- 18 furniture polish
- 19 cleanser
- 20 scrub brush
- 21 sponge
- 22 bucket/pail
- 23 trash can / garbage can
- 24 recycling bin



[A-I]

- A. What are you doing?
- B. I'm **sweeping the floor**.



[1-24]

- A. I can't find the **broom**.
- B. Look over there!

[1-12, 15, 16, 20-24]

- A. Excuse me. Do you sell _____(s)?
- B. Yes. They're at the back of the store.
- A. Thanks.

[13, 14, 17-19]

- A. Excuse me. Do you sell _____?
- B. Yes. It's at the back of the store.
- A. Thanks.

What household cleaning chores do people do in your home?
What things do they use?